Third National
Community Health Nurses Conference 2009

A New Community Of Practice:
A Network of Ethics Support To Community Health Nurses

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Learning Objectives

- To describe our journey in building a collaborative community of practice which supports ethical decision making in community health.

- To increase the level of awareness and understanding of Community Based Ethics through the use of an ethical framework

What are Community Based Ethics and Why are They Important?

Key Trends Impacting Health Care Ethics

- Increased pressures from governments and payers to force change in practice
- Increase in caseload and complexity of issues dealt with by community health care staff
- Increase in the proportion of the population who are aged, continue to live at home, not living in assisted living facilities, dependent on home care services
- Impact of medical technology on people living longer with chronic conditions
- Trend toward earlier discharge of non-compliant and/or complex cases from hospital

Problem: Pressures/Challenges in Community Health Care Sector

- Faced with an increasing number of complex cases and ethical dilemmas, evidence that staff in the community health sector are experiencing considerable discomfort
- May have an impact on the recruitment and retention of workers in the sector
- Distress originates both from health care staff seeing their patients living with increased risk in the community, and
- Their uneasiness or disagreement with choices their patients may make which staff believe will affect them adversely

What are Community Based Ethics?

Critical reflection on ethical/moral issues arising in physical medicine, rehabilitation, complex continuing care, long-term care, mental health, home care, and research *toward:*

• deciding *what* we should do (what decisions are morally right or acceptable);

• explaining *why* we should do it (justifying our decision in moral terms);

• describing *how* we should do it (the method or manner of our response)

•End result: doing the right thing for the right reason!

When is an Issue an Ethical Issue?

When

…we encounter conflicting values, beliefs and goals, or difficult alternatives

…we have conflicting obligations or responsibilities

…we are concerned that rights are being violated or persons are not being respected

…we are concerned with fairness and justice

…we are unsure what we should do or why we should do it

Ethical Dilemmas

- Result of problems of access to service, limited resources in community, increased pressure for hospital discharge
- Conflict over treatment decisions, issues of client choice, relationship of client and family
- Discomfort among workers from clients living with increased risk, disagreement with client choice
- True ethical dilemma involves a situation where there is no clear or obvious right or wrong answer, or where the choice may be between two evils or two goods

Key Issues Identified by Front-Line Community Nurses

- Making choices
- Priority setting and allocation of financial resources
- Workplace demands
- Environmental factors
- Client safety
- Staff safety
- Consent

Why The Community Ethics Network Was Formed

"We" Decided to Do Something

- Inconsistency in approach/decision-making and conflict between policy and practice

- "Doing the best we can" without direction or guidance in particular in smaller organizations

- Wanted a common approach -- framework, tools and resources -- for ethical decision making on an inter-organizational basis

Community Ethics Network

CEN Membership

Bellwoods Centres for Community Living Inc.
Calea Limited
Canadian Red Cross – Ontario Zone
CANES Home Support Services
CanCare Health Services
Casey House Hospice
Central CCAC
Central West CCAC
Circle of Care
City of Toronto, Long Term Care Homes and Services
Closing the Gap Healthcare Group
Community Care East York
Community Rehab
COTA Health
Etobicoke Services for Seniors
First Health Care Services
George Brown College, Centre for Health Sciences
Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant CCAC

Mid-Toronto Community Services
Mississauga Halton CCAC
Nightingale Health Care
Paramed Home Healthcare
Preferred Health Care Services
ProHome Health Services
S.P.R.I.N.T
Saint Elizabeth Health Care
South Riverdale Community Health Care
Spectrum Health Care
S.R.T. Med-Staff
Storefront Humber Inc.
Surrey Place Centre
Therapy Health Care Inc.
Toronto Central CCAC
Toronto Homemaking Services
Toronto Public Health
VHA Home Healthcare
We Care Health Services

37 member Organizations

Common Approach to Ethical Decision Making for Community Health & Support Sector

Common approach is comprised of the following 5 components:

1. Staff education
2. Community code of ethics
3. Decision-making worksheet
4. Case reviews
5. Ethical Advisor

Decision-Making Worksheet

- A step-by-step tool that guides staff through a comprehensive process

- Takes into account the facts, emotions, ethical principles, various alternatives and their consequences, and evaluation of the outcome

- Provides a forum for open & non-threatening discussion

Ethical Decision Making
Remember these key steps when you have an ethical dilemma.

I D E A

Information gathering and **Describe** situation
a) gather information/facts on the case
b) describe the different emotions
c) identify ethical issues

Explore options and analyze
d) explore options and consider their strengths and weaknesses

Act on your decisions and evaluate
e) develop an action plan
f) evaluate the plan
g) self-evaluate your decision

Remember
- document the actual plan in the chart
- seek help if necessary and consult with the person you report to

Ethical Decision-Making Worksheet

I Identify the facts

D Determine the ethical principles in conflict

E Explore the options

A Act on your decision and evaluate

Step 1: Identify the Facts

Gather information/facts on the case

Re-state the details of the case. What are the main issues or areas of concern/tension? Who are the individuals involved/who else needs to be involved? How does the client's history/prognosis affect this case? Are there other factors to consider, including company policies, directives and regulation?

Step 2: Determine the Ethical Principles in Conflict

Identify ethical issues (i.e. what ethical principles are in conflict?)

Refer to Community Health Code of Ethics on the last page for further details.

Principle	Explain the Issue

Code of Ethics
for the Community Health & Support Sector

We, as members of Community Health & Support Sector organizations, are committed to being an integral part of the communities we serve. We are responsible for: acting professionally and in a client-centred manner; upholding the dignity and honour of our clients; and practicing in accordance with ethical principles. This Code of Ethics is intended to provide us with specific ethical principles to address situations that we may encounter, and to guide us in our relationships with clients, family members and others in the support team, other health care practitioners, and the public. This code is intended to complement laws, codes and standards of professional practice.

Advocacy: We have the responsibility to help improve the awareness, the accessibility and the quality of our services by advocating on behalf of our clients. We will seek guidance both internally and externally to our organization for those situations that could place the organization and/or its clients at risk.

Client Confidentiality: Client information is confidential; we will ensure that clients and their legal substitute are informed of their right to consent to the sharing of necessary information with individuals and organizations directly involved in the client's care.

Commitment to Quality Services: We are committed to providing the highest quality services that will benefit our clients within available resources.

Conflict of Interest: We will not compromise services to our clients for our own personal benefit.

Dignity: In all our interactions we will demonstrate profound respect for human dignity. We will be responsive and sensitive to the diversity among our clients and staff groups.

Employee Safety: We recognize that the community work setting provides a unique working environment for all of us. We will take necessary measures to ensure our personal safety, and all safety concerns will be reported and addressed in a supportive and non-threatening way. After all options have been considered, we may withdraw service if our safety is compromised.

Fair & Equitable Access: We believe that each individual is entitled to an assessment. We will ensure that services are based on clients' needs, regardless of their income, age, gender, ethnicity or race, physical or mental ability, and any other factors such as diverse behaviors or lifestyle.

Health and Well Being: We will use a holistic approach to clients' health care needs by acknowledging all things important to them in their community.

Informed Choice and Empowerment: We believe that most individuals have the ability and the right to make decisions about their health. We will assist clients to make care plans and life choices in keeping with the client's values, beliefs and health care goals. We will ensure that clients are fully informed of their options and have all the information they need to make informed decisions about their health. If the client is mentally incapable of making these decisions, we will take directions from the client's legal substitute.

Relationships Among Community Agencies: We recognize there may be a competitive element in our working relationships, however we agree to respect one another's roles and to work together in the spirit of collaboration to maximize the effectiveness of client services.

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Personal Values & Ethical Principles (1)

- *Consider your own beliefs & values, why do you hold them?*
- *What are the values of your organization?*
- *Consider the values & beliefs of the client*
- *Beware of 'gut' or 'knee-jerk' reactions*

Personal Values & Ethical Principles (2)

- *Is this an ethical dilemma?*
- *Autonomy (Relational)*
- *Beneficence*
- *Non-Maleficence*
- *Justice*
- *Professional Boundaries/Duty to care*

Step 3: Explore Options

Explore options and consider their strengths and weaknesses

Brainstorm and discuss options either alone or with peers. Be creative and use your imagination. Consider a compromise. Predict the outcomes for each alternative. Does the alternative fit with the client/family values? Question whether the alternative meets the company policies, directives and regulations.

Option	Strengths	Weaknesses

Legal/Professional/Policy Considerations

- *Are any of the options legally problematic?*
- *Ethical Codes/Frameworks*
- *Applicable Policies*

Analogous Cases

▸ *Does this case resemble other cases?*

▸ *What decisions were made?*

▸ *Was the decision a good decision?*

▸ *Would you change anything in this case?*

▸ *One of the goals of the Community Ethics Network is to develop an inventory of cases and outcomes of these for ethics research*

STEP 4: ACT ON YOUR DECISION AND EVALUATE

**1. Develop an action plan (N*ote: the actual plan should be <u>documented </u>in the chart)*
*Given all the information that you have, **choose the best option available.**   Develop an action plan.   Present your suggested alternative and action plan to the client and those involved in such a way that it allows them to accept the plan.   Re-examine the alternatives if other factors come to light, if the situation changes, or if an agreement cannot be reached.   Determine when to evaluate the plan.   Document and communicate the plan*

2. Evaluate the plan
What was the outcome of the plan?   Are changes necessary?   Document the evaluation.

3. Self-evaluate your decision
How do you feel about the decision and the outcome?   What would you do differently next time? What would you do the same?   What have you learned about yourself?   What have you learned about this decision-making process?

Evaluation & Follow-up

- *Once implemented is the decision working?*
- *Will there always be conflict?*
- *Is this the 'best option'?*
- *What have we learned?*
- *What would you do differently next time?*
- *What would you do the same?*

Moving Forward ...

Current Priorities being addressed are;

- ➢ Education

- ➢ CEN Sustainability

- ➢ Focus on front line providers

- ➢ Inventory, market, and share ethics resources

- ➢ Apology Act

QUESTIONS ?